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M. LATHAM'S REPORT.

BOSTON, Dec. 2nd, 1852.

Several years past I have spent much of my time on the Sabbath among the Irish population, for the purpose of improving their moral condition.

I first began my operations in Cambridgeport. I visited them at their houses and read the Bible with them as often as permission was granted; when otherwise, I read to them in the open field; many of the children would assemble around me and receive instruction, to such I gave Books, Tracts, and religious newspapers, which were received by many and read, and I have reason to believe them instrumental in doing much good.

By this method with the blessing of God they ceased playing in the fields which they had considered it their priviledge thus to do, also out-door labor on the Sabbath was discontinued.

I wish here to mention one fact which shows the over-ruling providence of God. In this place there are two Rope walks, in one of these there was work and card playing frequently on the Sabbath, as I was told. I remonstrated against such doings or evil conduct, and told them if they continued thus to do, evil would befall them. They would not be deterred but locked themselves in. The door being fast I went away with my Books. I think in less than a year from that time the fiery elements lifted this *Rope walk toward heaven*, whilst the *other* stands a living monument of *God's* protection. In September, 1851, I commenced my operations in Boston among the Irish of Fort Hill, at that time many kinds of recreation were practised by the children on the Sabbath, such as playing *marbles*, playing *top*, pitching cents, jumping rope, carrying a flag on a pole, playing hocky, &c. On one Sabbath more than thirty children were making sport of a drunkard in Oliver street. In some of the houses I found them playing Cards; such vile conduct was truly grievous to behold. I mentioned to one of the day police that a remedy for the present evil was possible, and I would try an experiment.

I began by reading the Bible as I had done in Cambridgeport, but they ridiculed me and spoke against my Bible. Then I resorted to Books and Tracts, exposing the great sin of such conduct on the Sabbath; but some of them suffered martyrdom on the spot with shouts from the windows, others were taken and a quid of tobacco wrapped up in them and returned, others were spittle stained and politely returned. I took it all in good part. They would knock off my hat into the dirt, and throw decayed vegetables at me and pieces of brick and stones, by way of insult; at one time a *fire cracker* was put into my *coat pocket* when discharged burnt my clothes. Thus I was basely insulted, and not having any to befriend me I bore it patiently. One man said I had no right to be there, and wished the police to order me off the ground, if not he would take them to wipe his razor on, and other improper words. But in a few weeks he confessed he was wrong, that he had been reading them privately and found them all good and useful for his children, and unless moral instruction was given them in childhood they would be hard to govern in youth and riper years; he is now my best friend and takes them with delight. Andrew Carland said to me a few months since, that what I was doing for the Irish people was the noblest deed that could be performed for their benefit, wished me to persevere and not give up my Sunday operations, "for (he said) all our children need the books and papers now given to them." A person met me in South Boston and greatly desired me to come over there on the Sabbath and bring my Books, for, said she, "my old man misses you very much since he left Fort Hill." A little boy met me at the Worcester depot, said he was going into the country to remain, and thanked me for all the books that I had given him on Fort Hill, and, said he, "I wish you had one now." I gave him the Child's Paper he then left me much pleased, this was on a week day. A woman in her store on Fort Hill said to me a few months since, there is quite a change in the conduct of the people for the better on the Sabbath now than what was twelve months since, and if you continue your operations twelve months longer there will be a greater change still. I could mention many facts equally encouraging, but the change is visible to all who have known Fort Hill for the past six years. The first six months I was basely treated and although four men were stationed there on the

Sabbath to promote order, I had little or no help from either of them to protect me notwithstanding what I was doing was lessening the Police duties fifty per cent. Be it remembered however I censure them not, as they are not authorized to aid in this matter. It gives me great pleasure now to see such order in the streets on the Sabbath, with an increasing desire to read, and a call for good books and papers, as follows: have you the Christian Witness and Church Advocate, The *Child's Paper*, or the Youth's *Companion*, or the Youth's Penny Gazette, *The Young Reaper*, the Tract called the Poor Man's House Repaired, *Fool's Pence*, The Wonderful Escape, The Ox Sermon, many others too numerous to mention. With many books of a moral character. Rebuking the profane swearer, the slanderer, the *miser*, the spendthrift, the *vulgar* and *gambler*, thief and the liar, libertine and drunkard, Sabbath breaking, dishonesty, at the same time advocating *Justice*, *Truth* and Temperance, and love with all its cardinal virtues. Recommending reading Ephesians iv: 30, 31; Colossians iii: 12th verse, and so on. To obtain suitable matter for reading on the Sabbath, has been quite a tax on my time through the week, for more than a year past. Every thing pertaining to controversy has been my wish to avoid. Thus I have omitted reading much of the news of the day in order to gain time to select reading matter for the Sabbath distribution on Fort Hill. I think playing in the streets on Lord's day can be broken up, and card playing on the Sabbath can be cured. Last Sabbath I called at a room where both sexes were playing. I said I should not then enter complaint against them, sufficient was it for me to know that what they were doing was entered in the high court of Heaven and soon would be exposed to an assembled world. I said I was sorry to see holy time wasted in such a manner. They would soon find that "*time* wasted was suicide where more than blood is *spilt*." Or like Voltaire offering half his fortune if the Doctor would save his life six months. The Doctor said he could not live six weeks, then he said I am going to *Hell* and you will go with me. I gave them the Tract containing the account of his death. They put away the Cards. I then related one or two facts relative to card playing and left the room. Many of the Irish are given to card playing. Why is it so? Is it because they are more depraved by nature than other men? I say not! Is it not because they have been neglected and *oppressed* in

their native land by the Iron hand of British despotism instead of educating them? At the great fire on Fort Hill, their goods and furniture covering most of the mall, I saw not a Bible in the midst, but when a bureau drawer opened then I saw the pack of cards Card playing leads to intemperance, quarrelling, and fighting which makes work for the police and lawyers, and lawsuits, *poverty*, *hatred* and revenge which sometimes end in fires and *murder*. My object in giving out books and religious papers is to check these growing evils in our midst. To accomplish any amount of good, requires patience and *perseverance*, *humanity*, *wisdom* and some money. I have been more fatigued after performing this duty on Fort Hill on the Sabbath than any other day in the week. The fact is I do too much work in so short a time. The first cost of the Books and papers that I have given away on Fort Hill would amount to over $150, yet a good knowledge of the Bible reduced to practice, is worth more than all of them, and I hope the time is near when every family will have and read it. It would prove a powerful agent in family government; without it children are frequently punished with unreasonable severity, causing alienation and hatred. The effect is bad, like successive tempests upon the naked oak, if not uptorn in the strife, prepares itself by deeper root for the next contest. I have thus far labored (with some exceptions,) *single handed;* and the good already done, and the evil prevented, is to me a great satisfaction. But if I am obliged to relinquish this work for want of more time and means I hope some one better qualified will assume the duty.

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